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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh is currently suffering from a number of debilitating weaknesses in its education system. Seventy percent of all children are enrolled in primary school, but 75% of these children do not reach grade five. Futhermore, with absentee rates of 50% for both students and teachers, it is estimated that 35% of children who attend school are receiving no education, and 35% more are receiving less than 500 hours of instruction. The government of Bangladesh, the World Bank, NGO's and other donors, are working to address the access, quality, equity, and efficiency problems that plague the primary school system, but the needs of the over 34,000,000 illiterate people between the ages of 11 and 35 must be addressed. To this the government has proposed a set of five target programs for different groups. For instance, the program for 7-10 year olds would provide a two- to three-year course that would focus on basic education. These plans cannot be implemented without the help of outside groups offering funding and recommendations. (NK)

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BANGLADESH

Feasibility Study for Non-Formal Education Project

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World Education
John P. Comings
1991

BANGLADESH

Feasibility Study for Non-Formal Education Project

The 1981 census set the adult literacy rate for Bangladesh at 29% with wide differences between male and female (40% and 19%) and between urban and rural (40% and 20%) populations. Estimates from the 1991 census appear to show little improvement. At present, 3.8 million primary school age (7-11 years) children are not enrolled in school, and 34 million adolescents and adults (11-35 years) are illiterate. Though 70% of all children enroll in primary school, 75% of those who enroll do not complete the 5 years of primary education, almost 40% do not complete grade I, and 60% do not complete grade II. Assuming full attendance for both teacher and student, 2,968 contact hours are possible during five years of primary school, but for both grade I and II, total possible contact hours are only 472 per year. Since absenteeism by both teachers and students is high (estimates are 50%), total contact between student and teacher in grades I and II may be less than 250 hours per year. Educational statistics in Bangladesh are probably more positive than reality, and a reasonable guess would be that 35% of the school age cohort is receiving no education at all and another 35% are receiving less than 500 hours of instruction.

For the remaining 30% who do receive more than 500 hours of instruction, much of the curriculum is irrelevant to all but the 5% who complete secondary school and pass the High School Certificate (HSC) exam. Since the formal school system is designed to prepare students for the academic achievement of a secondary school certificate, the curriculum, materials and instructional methods are not formulated to provide a basic education to poor rural children.

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB), with the assistance of a group of donors which includes the World Bank, is working to improve the curriculum, access, equity and internal efficiency of the primary school system, but this process will be long and difficult. Even if these efforts lead to all children receiving a relevant and effective primary education by 2005 (within 15 years), the 34 million illiterate 11-35 year-olds will receive no education and, over the next 15 years (1991-2005), another 20 million may be added to this uneducated population.

To serve this group, the GOB began the Mass Education Programme (MEP) in 1980, but funding for the MEP was cut in 1982. The new government has made a commitment to MEP, and UNDP has provided funding to help the MEP expand its efforts. UNESCO is providing the services of a technical expert and support to the development of a new adult education curriculum and materials that follows a functional literacy approach. The MEP has a total of twenty-two staff (only 9 of whom are classified as professional), very little equipment and no vehicle. Given these constraints, the MEP has been unable to use the UNDP funding effectively.

Several big NGOs and many small NGOs have educational programs that serve both out-of-school children and adults, but useful evaluations of effectiveness are rare. BRAC has a highly regarded three year program for the 8-10 year old age group that approximates the first three years of the formal primary school curriculum and leads many students into that system at grade IV. BRAC also has a two year program for 11-14 year olds. Several other NGOs have followed BRAC's lead and developed similar programs. BRAC's materials are of equal or better quality than those of the formal primary school system and student teacher contact hours are reported to be significantly greater (700 possible per year with close to 100% attendance reported).

Several NGOs also have adult literacy courses. The materials from GSS, FIVDB, RDRS, and BACE were reviewed and all appeared to be sufficient. Only the FIVDB has a good evaluation report available. The FIVDB evaluation reported a 58% completion rate with 54% of those who complete attaining and maintaining over several years an ability in reading, writing and math equivalent to third grade. This translates to a 32% success rate at the third grade level, which is close to that of the formal primary school system. The FIVDB program is a six month (282) hour course.

Government Proposal

The present government believes that this target group (out-of-school youth and illiterate adults) must be served for reasons of social equity as well as the impact that a significant increase in literacy and basic education levels will have upon development. The MOE understands the weaknesses of the primary school system and the MEP and has been involved in a process of discussion and study which has led to a draft concept paper (attached). The MOE is refining this concept and should complete an official project concept paper by the end of August.

The MOE is proposing the development of an umbrella NFE program that would have five components. Though each component is described by an age range, the five groups are actually: married adults (15-35), youth who are too old to enter primary school but not yet married (11-14), out-of-school primary school age children (7-10), pre-primary school age children (5-6), and all rural youth and adults (all ages) who have some literacy skill. For each group the following programs are being discussed:

15-35 year olds: a one year course of approximately 400 hours that would focus on basic reading, writing and math with an additional curriculum that would cover knowledge and attitudes helpful to development. This target group is currently 26 million.

11-14 year olds: either a one year course similar to that for 15-35 year olds but with the additional curriculum and teaching methods geared to this age group or a longer course similar to that proposed for 7-10 year olds. The size of the target group is currently 8 million.

7-10 year olds: a two to three year course similar to the BRAC model that would provide an equivalent to the curriculum in grades I, II, and III for children who are not served by the formal school system. The size of this target group is currently 3.8 million.

5-6 year olds: an early childhood education course that would provide children an introduction to the experience of primary school and also educate their parents on the basics of health, nutrition and child development. The size of this population is currently 3 million.

All ages: the provision of simple, interesting and relevant reading materials that would allow for the practice of literacy skills learned in the formal or nonformal system and other educational experiences that would use non-print media and events. Since this program would not be geared to individuals, 68,000 sites (rural villages) is a reasonable estimate for the target population.

At present the NFE program is under the Director General of Primary Education, but MOE and Planning Commission officials voiced the concern that NFE needed to have its own Director General. The Secretary said that NGOs would be involved in implementation and could use their own materials and methods if they conform to some basic curriculum objectives.

The government has stated publicly that providing a basic education to all children and adults is a priority, and both the Minister and the Secretary of Education have made public commitments to this NFE effort. The Planning Commission stated that changes in the Fourth Five Year Plan (FY91 to FY95) and in the FY92 budget could be made to support this effort. The ADB, UNDP, UNICEF and SIDA are all interested in providing funding to some part of this effort. Given the vide range of age groups and the involvement of both the government and NGOs, most donor agencies would be interested in funding some part of this program.

Benefits

Though the formal school output, measured in terms of children with a minimum basic education (reading, writing and simple math skills), has been improving, the rate of improvement is much too slow. At the present rate of improvement, the formal school system will not produce its first literate age cohort until sometime in the next century. Additional inputs into the existing system would probably not produce a commensurate improvement in output because of structural issues that are being addressed but which will not be resolved soon.

At present, the formal primary school system (even with a student -- teacher ratio of 51:1) does not have the capacity to serve all children. A large grade I class size (which can be as great as 100) and high absenteeism by teachers (as much as 50%) discourage students early in the process. Since

only 50% of rural villages have a primary school, distance is also a factor in deterring school participation, particularly for girls. Though the primary schools are supposed to be free, parental expenditure can be as high as 500 Taka per year for tutoring fees, materials and uniforms, and rural family incomes are generally below 600 Taka per month.

An inexpensive and effective NFE system for primary school age children (that was free, had small classes and was close to home) would relieve the pressure for expanded access so that the primary school system could focus on issues of quality, equity and efficiency. For the population that is now too old for primary school (11-14), but which has not acquired a basic education, an NFE system could provide a second chance before marriage and adulthood. Together, the improvement of the formal system and the provision of nonformal education for these two groups would increase the proportion of the school age population which has the skills equivalent to a basic education at a much faster rate than could the formal system alone.

An NFE program for adults (15-35) could provide a chance for an educational input into the present productive age group who are making the decisions that effect the families of Bangladesh. For all rural youth and adults, a successful effort to provide interesting, simple and useful reading materials would build on the investment already made through the formal and nonformal school systems. In addition, an NFE system could provide a range of other educational interventions using non-print media and events that would support the work of health, agriculture, family planning and other development agencies.

The NFE pre-primary program would prepare children to be successful in the formal schools and make investments in primary schools pay a higher return. This effort would also provide a chance to educate parents to play a role in improving the primary school system as well as helping their children to succeed.

Higher literacy and education rates have a positive impact upon other development sectors and economic growth. Improvements in the primary school system will have no effect upon the age group above 11 years or below 7 years. For the 7-10 year old age group, there is an indication that increased resources put into the formal school system would not significantly increase the level of basic education and literacy. NFE offers the possibility to serve all of these groups well at a lower unit cost than the primary school system. In addition, NFE programs for 7-10 year olds can add students to the higher primary grades and improve the internal efficiency of the formal school system.

Since women and girls make up the largest group within the out-of-school child and illiterate adult population, female access to education will be improved by an NFE system that serves large numbers of out-of-school children and adults. In addition, more educated parents will be more likely to send their female children to school and support their continuing in school to completion of primary school.

Analysis of Existing Programs

There is no existing comprehensive NFE system. Some NGOs are serving most of these target groups, but none have a plan for providing education for all groups in one geographic area within a set time period.

15-35 year olds. The 15-35 year old group is being served by the government through the MEP and by NGOs, some of which have subventions from the MEP. NGOs with experience in this area all state that serving adults is much more difficult than serving children, though no group has put the same level of resources into education for adults as for children. For example, BRAC in its nonformal primary school program provides 2000 hours of instruction at a cost of $45 over three years while their adult education model was only 100 hours over four months and cost very little.

Jennings reports that in FIVDB's six-month course, 58% of entering students complete the course and 85% of the completers receive a good or fair rating on reading ability. 54% of completers can read a third grade III text and 41% can read a grade IV text. This level of achievement is made at a very low cost both in terms of opportunity costs (very little) and cash expenses ($7.15).

Reliable statistics on the number of adults being served or the existing government and NGO capacity to deliver these services do not exist. NGOs are probably providing services to somewhere in the range of 25,000 people per year. Several successful and inexpensive NGO models exist that could be expanded, and expansion should lead to lower unit costs.

11-15 year olds. BRAC and several other NGOs have models for serving this age group. Most have a two year program that is said to accomplish more than the three year program for younger students. In BRAC's program, 80% of the completing students are reported to enter grade IV or V. No comprehensive study that looks at all factors that lead to success or at input and output has taken place. Both the MEP and NGO adult literacy programs are serving this target group but no special provision is made for them.

If a shorter course similar to the proposed 400 hour adult course is to be provided to this group, a new set of materials would need to be developed specifically for them. The existing successful adult materials could serve as a model and be modified for use with this group. Even if a comparative test of these materials and the adult materials show that no advantage is gained by having a separate design for this age group, there may be an advantage to teaching this group in a separate class, since teaching them with adults might inhibit one or the other of these age groups. Estimates for services to this age group are included in the totals for adults and children.

7-10 year old. The BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) model is the one that most people suggest for the 7-10 year old group (NFPE serves 8-10

year olds). Though everyone who has seen NFPE gives it high praise, only one systematic evaluation is available. Though this evaluation showed the NFPE drop-out rate to be much lower than the government schools, other measures of output were less positive. UNICEF, and to a lesser extend BRAC, stated that all NFE funding should go into this age group along with the 11-15 year olds. Since they were so strong in their opinions, a longer analysis of the NFPE is presented here.

The NFPE provides a three year course of 675 hours per year at a cost of $15 per student per year. Class size is kept at thirty. The materials and instructional design are of good quality and community involvement is high. Teachers have at least a grade IX education and are trained by BRAC staff for 12 days initially with follow-up training on a regular monthly (1 day) and yearly (4 days) basis. At present, 75 percent of teachers are women.

A comparison of BRAC NFPE graduates with government school grade III students showed BRAC students scored lower on a composite score of tests of reading, writing, math and environmental studies.

Achievement of BRAC and Government Students

	BRAC Schools	Government Schools
All students	38.96%	45.51%
Female	38.05%	42.94%
Male	40.00%	47.32%

The formal school may have drawn from a more affluent group of children and the test may have favored students who followed the government curriculum and texts. No socio-economic data was given on the government school children but data was provided on the BRAC students. 24% of the BRAC students came from families with a significant land holding (.13 to 1.62 hectares) and 48% came from families with some land (at least .05 hectares). 33% of the parents of BRAC students had some level of literacy and 7% had schooling at the grade V or above level. 42% of the BRAC families reported monthly income above 500 Taka. Though no comparison can be made with the government school, at least 20% of the BRAC students came from families with literate or semi-literate parents, more than .2 hectares of land and more than 1000 Taka of monthly family income.

The drop-out rate of the formal school was much greater but the government schools may also have been less selective in recruitment. The BRAC model claims that 95% of its entering students complete three years and enter into grade IV. On a single class basis the data showed:

Single Class Progress Grade I to IV
Actual Students

	Initial Class Size	Grade III Completion	Entrance into Grade IV
BRAC			
Total	30	29	25
Female	16	15	14
Government			
Total	95	56	42*
Female	38	23	17*

*estimate

The system is presently serving 120,000 per year. No data exists on other NGO programs for this target group, but they are probably serving at least another 10,000 students. BRAC is set to expand its program significantly next year. The existing capacity for all NGOs is probably 200,000 per year, and they could expand within their present working areas (about 18% of the country) quickly and effectively. According to NGO leaders, expansion outside their present working areas would be slower and might suffer in effectiveness.

The present cost of $15 per student per year may not include some costs of community organizing and overhead. For some level of increase in client population, there should be economies of scale. Unit costs for materials should decline as larger numbers are produced, and there might be unit cost economies with training, supervision and management as more experienced teachers and communities require less supervision. The government schools cost $10 per student per year for grades I-V, but this figure, too, may not have all costs included. Economies of scale have already been realized in the government school system. The BRAC model probably has an advantage in terms of unit cost per successful grade III completer (or equivalent).

5-6 year olds. The only NFE pre-primary program encountered is one supported by the Grameen Bank. They have a set of materials which they sell to their clients at a cost of 3 Taka, and clients are urged to use them to prepare their children for school. No evaluation is available and a copy of the materials was not revieved.

All ages. Many of the NGOs produce follow-up reading materials. As with other aspects of NFE, no good research or evaluation was available. A number of the materials were revieved, and they appear to be satisfactory. Systems

for production, distribution and local management of these materials have been developed by some NGOs. If produced on a large scale, 100 pages of follow-up reading materials would probably cost $.30. An investment of $100 per village would provide an interesting and useful library.

No NFE non-print media (radio or TV) was reported, but there was a lot of interest in using media to support NFE programs. Other kinds of non-print media (slide shows and picture stories) exist in small numbers, and some of the NGOs may use community events for educational purposes.

Project Elements

Assuming the Government of Bangladesh decides to form a Directorate of NFE with components similar to those outlined in the draft project concept paper, assistance for the establishment of the following elements by the IDA along with other donors would be useful.

NFE Board. Since the NFE system will be serving the objectives of other Ministries (there will be health, agriculture and other types of content in NFE programs) and depend, in part, on NGOs for implementation, a national board, with members from different ministries and NGOs, should be charged with advising the NFE Directorate. Technical assistance to this board so that the nature of the NFE system and the role it can play in national development is clear and the constraints on its rapid development are understood would be useful.

Management Unit. The new Directorate will need a management unit that takes policy and translates it into procedures, makes decisions on the provision of subventions to implementing agencies and monitors the use of those funds. In the beginning, this national staff should be small and charged with managing resources not implementing programs. Funding for the training of this staff and technical assistance to develop its procedures and monitoring systems would be useful. Some equipment would also be useful to the development of this unit.

Research and Evaluation Unit. The Directorate needs a research and evaluation unit that looks at existing NFE programs with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This effort will help to refine the management unit's monitoring system and feed information and insight into policy making bodies. This unit should also study the educational issues that are producing a demand for NFE and which have an impact upon the success of NFE efforts. The Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development (FREPD) and the Institute for Educational Research (IER) are possible institutions to house this unit, and UNDP is considering funding the development of a research capacity within the MOE. Present and new staff could benefit from technical assistance and training as they begin this effort. This technical assistance and training should focus on the development of a comprehensive agenda for research and a plan for program monitoring as well as the design of protocols to implement this work. Some equipment would also be useful to the development of this unit.

Training and Technical Assistance Unit. The Directorate should have a training and technical assistance unit that is working with NGOs and other implementing agencies that have NFE models to help refine and improve those models. For each target group, several effective models with separate materials and implementation plans might emerge. As this unit gains experience and expertise it will begin providing service to all implementing agencies in the areas of staff training, materials development, formative evaluation and organizational development. Training and technical assistance, equipment and some civil works would be useful to the development of this unit.

Program Implementation. Since there are existing NGO models for all of the proposed NFE target groups, the Directorate should begin funding implementation immediately. In the beginning, funding should be provided through a proposal process where the implementing agency sets out the number of clients to be served and the expected output both in numbers and attainment of skills, knowledge and affective change. The Management Unit can monitor each agency by looking at a sample of sites. The large NGOs will be the first to apply and there is every indication that they can be successful implementors. Even so, smaller and newer NGOs should be encouraged to take on a small number of sites. The Technical Assistance and Training Unit should manage a system of learning from and sharing the experiences of each of the implementing agencies and in the development of new implementing agencies. Along with traditional NGOs, community groups, mosques, women's groups and other possible implementors should be encouraged to try providing service. This diversity of groups will allow the Directorate to use and improve all existing capacity for local level management of implementation.

Agencies should be supported to expand their existing models (such as BRAC's focus on children's schooling), but other forms of implementation should be attempted. For example, one NGO or a consortium of NGOs, community groups, Mosques and primary schools in one Union might attempt a mass campaign that is meant to serve all people in the Union within two or three years ending with a significant increase in the literacy rate and the entire primary school age cohort enrolled in either government or NGO schools. Another group might experiment with a model that serves only the 11-15 year old group to see if this is a more cost-effective approach.

The Directorate, with help from the Research and Evaluation Unit, should be looking at the cost-effectiveness of each implementing agency, each approach to a specific target group, and each target group. The Technical Assistance and Training Unit will be improving the effectiveness of each of these agencies and programs, but funding should flow to the most effective channel. The most effective channel will change over time, and an umbrella NFE project needs the flexibility to make decisions based on impact and cost effectiveness.

For example, in the beginning, more funds may go into the 8-10 and 11-14 year old target groups if they are, indeed, easier to serve. In some

geographic areas, the needs of this age group may change as the formal school system expands. At that time, more funds might begin to flow into the 15-35 and 5-6 target group. The post-literacy follow up program may be a very cost effective and important program from the beginning, but a good deal of research and materials development as well as pilot efforts needs to take place before an effective model exists. In the beginning, therefore, fewer resources may go into this area but after a few years of development, funds might be taken away from other target groups to implement this effort.

From the beginning, all target groups should be served so that the Research and Evaluation Unit can begin making comparisons of cost and impact. Decision on the allocation of resources to one target group over another, one program design over another, or one type of implementing agency over another, at this time, would be made on little objective data. Over the first few years of the project, that data should begin to develop and the decisions should become more rational.

Issues

NGO Involvement. Though the involvement of NGOs in implementation was accepted by the government, the possibility that a large government bureaucracy should be developed to implement this program directly was also discussed. The NFE system described here is a temporary (10-15 year) measure. Eventually, all primary school age children will be in school and the need for an NFE approach to this age group will disappear. As that cohort begins to move toward adulthood, the 11-15 year old group will all have a basic education or be in school and that group, too, will disappear as a target for the NFE system. The GOB has plans to add a pre-primary grade to the existing system, and so that element of the NFE system will also disappear. In the future, the NFE system will be serving adults who need remedial education, job skill training, and retraining for new industries. At that time, the government might decide to expand its Directorate, but implementation, even then, might be better done by private or local agencies that are coordinated by the MOE.

The use of NGOs and other non-governmental structures for implementation allows the government to provide service without committing itself to a hugh bureaucracy that will be out-dated within 10 years. By participating as a policy, technical assistance, research, evaluation and training institution, the NFE Directorate develops the capacity to prepare new NFE programs as they are needed. The Directorate might decide in the future to build an implementing structure or could continue coordinating and funding the efforts of local government and non-government institutions.

Most of the big NGOs have come together in a consortium called the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) with the objective to launch a national campaign involving NGOs, popular forces (teachers, students, cultural bodies, professionals and intellectuals) and the government to achieve literacy for the majority of the population within the next decade. CAMPE offers a

mechanism for coordinating NGO efforts in NFE and should be included in the dialogue that leads to the development of a Directorate of NFE.

Service to Adults Some people, particularly those involved in the nonformal primary school program, proposed that no resources be put into adult education. The justification given is that children should be served first for they will have their literacy over a longer period of time and are easier to teach. In addition, 55% of the population is now under 15 years of age, and an argument was made that limited resources should be focused on this cohort.

Another position voiced was that poor rural adults have no use for literacy. There is no doubt that the MOE should have the provision of a basic education to school age children as its top priority, but some resources should be directed at serving adults. There is a social equity argument for services for adults. A significant percentage of Bangladesh's population has received little benefit from any government expenditures. Those who have money, are urban and male, for the most part, have access to education, while the rural poor and most women have little access. NFE for adults is something that only benefits the poor and disenfranchised.

Though literacy should be part of any NFE program for adults, it should not be the only curriculum objective. An NFE program for adults provides the government with a chance to make its case for each development sector in an effective way. When this is done with adults, the people who are in decision making capacity with Bangladeshi families, and who will maintain those positions over the next 15 years, are addressed. Adult NFE programs have proved to be effective with far less in the way of resources than the programs designed for children, and there is no indication that children learn faster than adults.

When looked at on an individual basis, literacy for a poor rural adult in Bangladesh appears to be worthless both to that person and to the nation. The same could be said for literacy for a poor rural child. On the other hand, poor rural nations like Sri Lanka and states like Kerala with high literacy rates have much higher standards of living than similar places with lov literacy rates. With a large population, the subtle individual changes that come with the acquisition of lov levels of literacy and basic education become profound. If all primary school age children in Bangladesh were in school tomorrov, it would still be 20 years before 80% of rural village children had one literate parent. If education at the basic primary level is of any value, it is of more value to an adult who is using that skill to improve the lives of his or her family.

Linking NFE to other programs. With NFE for adults, the case is made that it is only worthwhile if it is linked to other development programs. It is definitely more worthwhile if it is, but the education of children in rural Bangladesh is not linked to specific development efforts either. Education has a value separate from its immediate utilitarian aspects. Any NFE program should link itself to the wider development efforts taking place within a

region, both NGO and government. In some cases those development efforts are ill conceived or dysfunctional, and the NFE system should attempt to prepare participants to have an impact on making those programs more effective.

Reducing Costs and Cost Recovery. Even with additional grants and loans, the financial resources available for serving these populations are inadequate. Cost recovery is probably impossible with a population that is among the poorest in this very poor country. In the evaluation of the BRAC NFE primary schools, 85% of the parents said they sent their children to the BRAC schools because they were free.

Cost reduction could come from exploring models that require less time or use a higher teacher student ratio (particularly for the 7-10 and 11-15 year old group. Less costly models do exist (Naulo Bihana in Nepal and the ashram schools in Thailand, for example), and some experimentation with these might produce a cost savings. If all implementing agencies could commit to a few good models, than economies of scale could be realized in materials production and teacher training.

Risks

There is no existing comprehensive NFE system, and the risk exists that the government is not serious or not serious enough to make such an ambitious and radical effort succeed. If the government makes NFE a separate Directorate, places in the DG position a person who has the experience and personality needed to launch such an effort, and provides the program with a clear and sufficient mandate, this risk would be lowered significantly.

One danger that always exists with this sector is that the government may decide to launch a national literacy campaign meant to serve all illiterates in a short period of time. Such programs, even when managed well, do not appear to have a sufficient impact in countries like Bangladesh with very high rates of illiteracy, few reading materials in rural areas and little personal advantage to acquiring literacy skills.

The government does not have to accept a limited response to this problem of illiteracy, but the size and scope of the response should develop over several years of careful planning and experience. Service can be provided from the beginning of the program, but at a modest level dictated by the existing capacity for implementation. That capacity can expand each year, and a national program that serves a 1,000,000 people a year could be developed within five years. Near the turn of the century, when the formal school system is functioning effectively for most children, a larger campaign that serves several million a year might be possible. At that time, sufficient resources should be available to serve the remaining illiterate population, the availability of reading material will be greater and the reasons for literacy will be clear.

Another risk is that the curriculum could be limited to literacy, particularly if the government favors a large mass campaign. Though literacy and basic skills should be the central focus of the NFE system, as much or more benefit (in an immediate sense) can accrue from the other parts of the curriculum which should focus on knowledge, skills and attitudes that can improve life in rural villages and contribute to national development. Designing the curriculum, materials and methods for this component can be more difficult than for the reading, writing and math. There is a danger that the NFE program will lecture participants with meaningless slogans about limiting family size and paying attention to proper nutrition. Time, resources and technical expertise are needed to produce a good and effective NFE program that addressed complicated issues such as family planning and nutrition.

As the resources put into the NFE system increase the formal primary, secondary and tertiary education systems may begin to object, and if their political clout is great enough, government support for NFE might wane in the future. There is the additional risk that as the NFE for 7-10 year olds expands, it will begin to compete with the formal primary school system. If the NFE system is better, the most motivated students will choose those schools and leave the formal schools with fewer students or with less motivated students. Motivation, in this case, may relate to the education and income of the parents as well as the personal desire of each student, and the NFE system may begin serving students who would have been in the government system anyway. Though this might improve the education of those students, it would not expand access to primary school. Limits could be placed on the size of the NFE system, on the placement of its schools, and the income of the families of its students as a way to lessen this competition. Or, the eventual merger of the NFE and formal system could be planned from the beginning.

As the NFE program grows, it could face some of the same problems of the formal school system both in terms of decreased efficiency and increased cost. For example, as the BRAC teachers gain years of experience, they may demand higher salaries, benefits and job security. As NGOs begin to manage very large implementation, their bureaucracies may become as inefficient as those of the government. Developing a large number of implementing entities might slow or avoid the development of these problems.

Potential Output and Costs

The potential output and costs must, at this point, be an estimate based on little in the way of good data. The unit cost for NFE programs appears to be between $5 per year for the least expensive adult eduction programs to $15 per year for the BRAC nonformal primary school model. For this projection $10 per year per person is used as a composite that assumes a range of programs. Present capacity is assumed to be 250,000 participants per year with increases of 100% per year possible.

Costs and Outputs
In Million of $US and Clients and Thousands of Villages

Component	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	Total
TA/Training	$1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	.5	.25	.25	6.00
Implementation	$1.00	2.00	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00	25.00	30.00	108.00
Clients	.10	.20	.50	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	10.80
Post-literacy	--	--	$.25	.50	.75	1.00	1.50	2.00	6.00
Villages	--	--	2.50	5.00	7.50	10.00	15.00	20.00	60.00

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